

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An apparatus for transporting sheets into a fixed image reading position, comprising:

a drive roller; and

5 a pad having a lower layer made of a flexible material and an upper layer provided on the lower layer and made of rigid material in the form of film with a kinetic friction coefficient of 0.2 or less, the pad being biased to the drive roller so that the upper layer contacts a peripheral
10 surface of the drive roller to form a nipping region between the drive roller and the pad by a compressive deformation of the flexible lower layer of the pad.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the lower layer
15 of the pad has a compressive residual strain of 10% or less.

3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the upper layer of the pad is made of an electrically conductive material.

20 4. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the lower layer of the pad is made of an electrically conductive material.

5. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein an electrostatic charge generated by a contact the upper layer
25 with the sheet is discharged through the lower layer.

6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the pad is biased toward the drive roller by a spring.

5 7. An apparatus for transporting sheets into a fixed image reading position, comprising:

 a drive roller;

 a pad having a rigid backup portion, a lower layer made of a flexible material and an upper layer provided on
10 the lower layer and made of rigid material in the form of film with a kinetic friction coefficient of 0.2 or less;
 and

 a spring which biases the pad to the drive roller so that the upper layer contacts a peripheral surface of the
15 drive roller to form a nipping region between the drive roller and the pad by a compressive deformation of the flexible lower layer of the pad.